

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
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FOR USDEL UNHRC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, CI

SUBJECT: LETELIER/MOFFITT ASSASSINATION CASE

1. FOLLOWING IS GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR DEPARTMENT
SPOKESMAN FOR NOON BRIEFING MARCH 3. QUESTION WAS
ASKED AND RESPONSE FOLLOWED GUIDANCE:

Q. THE WASHINGTON STAR SAYS TODAY THAT THE US IS
PREPARED TO BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CHILE
UNLESS THE TWO CHILEANS WANTED FOR QUESTIONING IN THE
LETELIER CASE ARE PRODUCED. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT?

A. I DO NOT WANT TO SPECULATE ON WHAT THE US GOVERNMENT
MIGHT DO IN A HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION. WE REGARD THIS
AS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER AND THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT HAS
ASSURED US OF THEIR COOPERATION IN THE INVESTIGATION.
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Q. BUT PRESS REPORTS QUOTE STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS
AS HAVING SAID THERE COULD BE A BREAK IN RELATIONS?

A. I DO NOT KNOW WHO MADE SUCH A STATEMENT BUT I CAN
ASSURE YOU THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION IS AS I HAVE
STATED - THE CHILEANS ARE AWARE OF HOW WE VIEW THE

MATTER AND THEY HAVE ASSURED THEIR COOPERATION.

Q. BUT WHAT IF THEY DON'T COOPERATE?

A. THAT IS A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT HAS HAPPENED WITH THE LETTERS
ROGATORY SENT TO CHILE?

A. THEY HAVE BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE CHILEAN FOREIGN
MINISTRY. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS INFORMED US THAT
THEY IN TURN HAVE PASSED THEM TO THE CHILEAN COURTS.

Q. WHEN DO WE EXPECT FURTHER ACTION FROM THE CHILEANS?

A. WE HOPE THAT PROMPT ACTION WILL BE TAKEN, BUT I
CANNOT GIVE YOU ANY SPECIFIC TIMING.

2. TRANSCRIPT OF ACTUAL EXCHANGE ON CHILE:

Q. HODDING, THERE IS A REPORT THIS MORNING THAT THE
UNITED STATES AS A POSSIBLE OPTION, IS CONSIDERING
BREAKING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CHILE IF THE CHILEANS
DON'T COOPERATE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE LETELIER
ASSASSINATION.

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A. WE HAVE TOLD THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT THAT WE REGARD
OUR REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN THIS MATTER AS A VERY
SERIOUS MATTER AND THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT HAS ASSURED
US OF THEIR COOPERATION IN THE INVESTIGATION.

Q. BUT THAT DOESN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION.

A. AND I SIMPLY AM NOT AWARE OF ANY SUCH THREAT OR
POSITION BEING TAKEN.

Q. YES, I WONDER IF YOU CAN BE MORE PRECISE. ARE YOU
DENYING THAT BREAKING RELATIONS WITH CHILE IS AN
OPTION?

A. WAIT A MINUTE. I DO NOT KNOW OF THAT ISSUE ARISING
WITH CHILE.

WHAT I AM SAYING TO YOU IS, THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT IS
AWARE OF THE FACT THAT WE REGARD THIS WHOLE MATTER AS
VERY SERIOUS, AND THEY HAVE ASSURED US OF THEIR COOPERA-
TION.

AND, SO SPECULATING BEYOND THAT IS SIMPLY NOT IN MY PROVINCE. I CAN SAY TO YOU THAT THAT KIND OF A THREAT OR STATEMENT HAS NOT BEEN RAISED WITH THE CHILEANS. IT HASN'T EVEN ARISEN.

YOU KNOW, WHATEVER I SAY ON THIS, I AM NOT GOING TO TELL YOU OF FIVE MILLION OPTIONS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED BY ANYBODY --

Q. BUT WE JUST WANT ONE OPTION.

A. I UNDERSTAND THAT, AND WHAT I AM SAYING TO YOU IS -- YOU CAN ASK ME, BUT THE NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES-- I AM TELLING YOU THAT AT THIS POINT EVEN SUCH A CONSIDERATION IS HYPOTHETICAL.

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THE CHILEANS HAVE SAID THEY ARE GOING TO COOPERATE WITH US.

Q. WHAT STEPS HAVE THE CHILEANS TAKEN TO SHOW COOPERATION?

A. AT THIS POINT THE LETTERS ROGATORY HAVE BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE CHILEAN FOREIGN MINISTRY, AS YOU KNOW.

THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS INFORMED US THAT THEY HAVE, IN TURN, PASSED THEM ALONG TO THE CHILEAN COURTS.

I DO NOT KNOW THE SPECIFIC TIMING OF WHAT HAPPENS NEXT. WE DO, OF COURSE, HOPE THAT PROMPT ACTION IS GOING TO BE TAKEN.

Q. ARE THEY STILL DENYING KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE TWO GENTLEMEN THAT THE U.S. WOULD LIKE TO INTERROGATE?

A. I DON'T KNOW OF ANYTHING FURTHER AT THIS POINT ON THIS -- OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT IT IS IN THE COURT PROCESS.

Q. HODDING, IN VIEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S POLICY OF WISHING TO HAVE FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, WOULD WE NOT BE CORRECT TO ASSUME THAT SEVERING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CHILE IS NOT AN OPTION UNDER CONSIDERATION?

A. LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING: I HAVE SAID JUST ALMOST EXACTLY WHERE WE ARE. WE HAVE ASKED FOR SOMETHING. THE UNCLASSIFIED

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CHILEANS HAVE ANSWERED THAT THEY INTEND TO COOPERATE WITH US. I KNOW OF NO SUCH THREAT, NO SUCH POINT BEING MADE TO THEM BY US AND THAT IS THE END OF IT.

Q. BUT ISN'T THAT MATTER SERIOUS ENOUGH THAT IF --

LOOK, LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING: ONE NEWS STORY DOESN'T MAKE ANYTHING SERIOUS ENOUGH FOR ME TO HAVE TO GO INTO THE ENTIRE POSSIBILITIES OF WHAT LIES INSIDE THE CONSIDERATIONS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. THAT'S JUST A FACT OF LIFE.

Q. THAT'S A FAIR QUESTION. BUT I HAVE TWO QUESTIONS HERE:

THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS SAID IT WANTS TO HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH EVERYBODY. HAS IT ABANDONED AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE --

A. NO, OF COURSE NOT.

Q. ARE WE --

A. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT HAVING NORMAL RELATIONS IS AN OBVIOUSLY USEFUL OBJECT OF FOREIGN POLICY.

WE HAVE ALSO NOTED, OF COURSE, THAT THERE ARE CASES WHERE WE CAN'T DO IT.

Q. HODDING, WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT -- THE U.S. WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A PROMPT RESPONSE, IS THERE ANY --APART FROM THE TIME LIMIT TO THAT --

AND ALSO, ARE YOU SATISFIED THAT WHAT THE CHILEANS HAVE DONE UP TO NOW IS IN LINE WITH THEIR PROMISE THAT THEY WOULD COOPERATE?

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A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING THAT INDICATES THAT THEY ARE NOT COOPERATING.

Q. AND IS THERE A TIME LIMIT WHICH MUTUALLY --

A. I DON'T HAVE A TIME LIMIT DOWN HERE. WE HOPE FOR A

PROMPT RESPONSE.

I DON'T HAVE A DAY-BY-DAY, OR I DON'T HAVE WHEN THE
DEADLINE IS. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 03 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RSSTEVEN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Film Number: D780098-0435
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803107/aaaadnky.tel
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